**Excerpt of the REGENTS’ ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDY (RACGS) Guidelines and Procedures for Review and Approval of Graduate Degree Programs**

**Quality Standards**

Members of RACGS have developed the quality standards listed below. Assessment of continued compliance with these standards must be included in the graduate program review process.

**1. Program Faculty**

A level of faculty productivity and commitment shall be required commensurate with expectations of graduate program faculty as indicated by the following:

* The number and qualifications of graduate faculty members are judged to be adequate for offering the graduate degrees in the specified areas, and faculty supervise an appropriate number of students.
* The preparation and experience of the faculty are appropriate for offering the graduate degree in an intellectually challenging academic environment as demonstrated by active scholarship and creative activity judged by accepted national standards for the discipline.

Faculty members have achieved professional recognition (nationally, internationally).

* The faculty garners significant external funding, as defined by disciplinary norms, which enhance the graduate program.
* Directors of dissertations and a majority of committee members generate new knowledge and scholarly and creative activity as determined by disciplinary norms.

**2. Program Graduates Since the Most Recent Review**

A level of student satisfaction, student accomplishment, and graduate accomplishment exists as evidenced by the following:

* Students express satisfaction with advisement, teaching, and program support services.
* The structure and conduct of the program lead to an appropriate degree completion rate and time-to-degree.
* The predominant employment of graduates within three to five years after graduation is in fields consistent with the mission of the program.
* Graduates demonstrate preparation for career-long learning and success as indicated by periodic surveys of career changes, job satisfaction, and relevance of doctoral training to various career opportunities.
* Accomplishment and potential of program graduates to generate new knowledge or new initiatives in teaching, public service, and/or other practice.

**3. Program Vitality**

A vital graduate program is dynamic and should possess the following indicators:

* The environment of the doctoral program promotes a high level of intellectual interaction among students, graduate faculty, and the larger academic community;
* The curriculum has been updated during the period under review with disciplinary developments;
* Essential resources are provided (e.g., library materials, computer support, laboratory facilities and equipment, student financial support, etc.); and
* Requirements for completion of the degree are deemed appropriate to the degree.

**4. Program Demand**

A graduate program should be able to demonstrate that there is demand on the part of prospective students and that it is fulfilling a clear need through the following:

* Student demand/enrollment during the period under review: application ratio, student GPA and GRE scores, or other indicators as appropriate; and
* The extent to which the program meets community, region and state needs and occupational societal demands.

**5. Program Interactions**

Graduate programs do not exist in isolation but rather in relation to and in comparison to similar programs in the discipline at other institutions and to cognate areas in the same institution. Information regarding appropriate interactions should include:

* Centrality of the program to advanced study in the specific discipline(s) regionally or nationally;
* The ability of the faculty and students to make a particular contribution in this field;
* Interactions, including interdisciplinary, among graduate, undergraduate, and professional programs, as appropriate;
* Interactions with and in collaboration with similar programs at other universities and organizations; and
* Programmatic access to special leveraging assets such as unique on- campus or off-campus facilities, non-university experts or collaborative institutions in the discipline, industrial or other support, endowments, as well as special funding opportunities.

**6. Program Access**

There should be evidence that the program has established or seeks to establish an appropriate level of diversity among its faculty and its graduate student body, as evidenced by:

* Trends and expectations in student demographics; and
* Proven efforts to sustain and enhance diversity of faculty and students.

**7. Assessment Mechanisms Used in Program Review**

Since quality indicators are increasingly becoming an integral part of ongoing program review, an enhanced recognition of the uses of outcomes assessment in the review process provides a useful tool for program improvement, as demonstrated by:

* A summary of the appropriate outcome measures used to assess program quality; and
* Procedures must be in place to ensure the use of assessment data for continuous quality improvement of the program.